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### Veterans Day Observance

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# Syracuse University

Remarks by Chancellor Kent Syverud  
Delivered on Tuesday, November 11, 2014  
Location: Hendricks Chapel  
Remarks: Veterans Day Observance

Good morning. I am Kent Syverud, Chancellor and President of Syracuse University. I welcome you to 2014 Syracuse University Veterans' Day observance.

I would like to start by thanking the folks who worked so hard to organize today's program:

- Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan Landis of Syracuse University Air Force ROTC
- Lieutenant Colonel Michael Bianchi, of Army ROTC
- The University College Student Veteran Advisors
- The Institute for Veterans and Military Families and executive director Mike Haynie
- Eileen Jervis [public relations manager] and Carrie McDonald [event coordinator] of University College
- Members of the Event Planning Committee

This is my first Veterans' Day observance as Chancellor of Syracuse University. I am honored to be a part of it, especially given the University's incredible legacy of welcoming veterans—a legacy it continues to build on today.

This morning I have the great pleasure of introducing today's keynote speaker, Major General John Batiste.

A fellow Upstate New Yorker, General Batiste is president and CEO of Klein Steel Service Center, based out of Rochester. He took the position upon retiring from active duty in 2005 after 31 years of service in the U.S. Army.

Over the course of those three decades, he served in a number of leadership and staff positions, with major deployments to Saudi Arabia and Iraq during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm; to Bosnia-Herzegovina; and to Kuwait and Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom 2.

His final assignment in the Army was commanding general of the 1st Infantry Division from August 2002 to June 2005, conducting successful peace enforcement operations in Kosovo and combat operations in Iraq.

During his command of 22,000 combat troops in Iraq in 2004 and 2005, General Batiste grew increasingly concerned about the management of the war and what he saw as a lack of a comprehensive national strategy to win it. In 2005, rather than accept a promotion to three-star general, he decided to retire from active service and speak out in good conscience. He has called it the toughest decision of his life.

But it further underscored a defining quality of General Batiste's character and career: his passionate and outspoken advocacy on behalf of, and support for, our nation's soldiers and veterans.

Among other civic activities, he is a past president of the Rochester Regional Veterans Business Council and currently sits on the board of the Rochester-based Veterans Outreach Center. He also is a member of the board of advisors for the First Division Museum at Cantigny of Wheaton, Illinois.

A graduate of the U.S. Military Academy and U.S. Army War College, General Batiste also has a master's degree in financial management from the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California.

Please join me now in welcoming our keynote speaker, General John Batiste.

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